

STATUS OF CLAIMS & SUPPORT FOR CLAIMS

Claims 1-30 are pending in this re-examination, claims 26 and 27-28 have been amended, and new claims 31-46 have been added without adding any new matter.

Claims 1-22 are original claims without any amendments.

Claim 26 has amendments supported by item 23 of Figure 5 and item 212 of Figure 6, discussed at column 6, lines 35-65, and column 7, lines 33-48, respectively.

Claims 27-28 are original claims without any amendments.

Claims 29-30 have been amended to make the claims consistent with the amendments of claim 26, and are supported by the same parts of the specification and drawings cited for the amendment of claim 26.

New claims 31-46 are added to this application, are based on original claim 26 and each narrows the scope with respect to original claim 26, and they are supported by the specification for the reasons discussed below:

New dependent claim 31 is supported by items 18, 20 of Figure 3, items 20, 21 of Figure 5, and items 200, 222 of Figure 6.

New independent claims 32, 36, 40, 41-42, and 46 are supported by original claim 26 and the cited sections for supporting the amendments of claim 26, with claim 46 being further supported by item 19 of Figure 4, and column 3, lines 52-67.

New dependent claims 33, 37, and 43-45 are supported by original claim 26, and by item 23 of Figure 5 and item 212 of Figure 6, discussed at column 6, lines 35-65, and column 7, lines 33-48, respectively.

Finally, new dependent claims 34-35, 38-39, and 41 are supported by original claim 26 and original claim 27; column 3, lines 59-62; column 5, lines 14-17 & 31-39; column 6, lines 45-49; and column 7, lines 25-31.

PATENT OWNER STATEMENT

This patent owner statement is filed pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.530.

Claims 1-25 remain in this application, and are not part of the re-examination of this application. Claims 26 and 29-30 are amended by this response. New claims 31-46 are added by this response based on claim 26, without adding any new matter and without broadening claim 26 as that claim was originally provided in the granted patent.

Applicant requests a personal interview with the Examiner prior to the next Office action.

Claim 26, as amended, is patentable over the newly cited prior art at least because that prior art fails to teach that “said harness body is integrated with said support line module via an accommodating *chamber* in either of said harness body or of said support line module” (emphasis added). Applicant notes that the Examiner argues that the newly cited prior art (based on the CMC reference) teaches a “‘CMC Rescue Firefighter Escape Line Fanny Pack’ which includes a pack (module) containing a support line and attached to a belt with loops”. Even if true, a teaching of a use of “loops” to attach the disclosed fanny pack to a belt is not the same as the use of a chamber, as recited in the claim. An example of such a chamber is shown by item 23 of Figure 5 and also shown by item 212 of Figure 6. Thus, claim 26, as amended, is clearly patentable over the newly cited material, as are claims 27-30, and new claim 31, which depend on claim 26.

Furthermore, claim 27 recites that “said support line module defines a plurality of elongated chambers, a portion of said support line being received in each of said chambers”, which is also a feature not found in the cited prior art.

New independent claims 32, and 41, both recite that the support line module includes a *chamber* for cooperating with the harness body portion, which is not found in the newly cited art, as discussed above regarding amended claim 26. Furthermore, new independent claims 40 and 46 recite a support line module having a chamber that receives a belt inserted within the chamber, a feature also not found in the newly cited art. Accordingly, claims 32, 40, 41, and 46, and the claims dependent thereon, are patentable

over the newly cited prior art for reasons similar to those discussed above regarding claim 26.

New independent claim 36 recites a *chamber* included in the harness body portion for cooperating with the support line module, and thus claim 36 is also patentable over the newly cited prior art for reasons similar to those discussed for claim 26, as are the claims dependent on claim 36.

New claim 42 recites “at least one shoulder strap having a first end connected to said harness body portion and a second end connected to said harness body portion” that is not found in the newly cited prior art, and thus claim 42 is patentable over that prior art, as are the claims dependent thereon.

In addition to the differences discussed above regarding new claim 46, that claim also recites that the “support line module conforms with said belt around a substantial portion of the waist of a wearer”, a feature that is shown by the example of Figure 7 of the application. Note that the short fanny pack of the newly cited prior art cannot conform around the waist of a user in this manner, and thus new claim 46 is patentable over the cited prior art for this reason as well.

Finally, dependent claims 34, 35, 38, and 39 all recite that “said support line module defines a plurality of chambers, and wherein a substantial portion of said support line is provided within said chambers”, and claim 41 recites similar features, which are features that are not found in the newly cited prior art, and thus these claims are patentable over the newly cited prior art for this reason as well.

In consideration of the foregoing analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. OMA-33400.

Respectfully submitted,
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